

IT WORKS!

As a long-time proponent for effective re-entry, Mayor A C Wharton in 2006 established successful offender re-entry as a key priority of his administration and is funding a pilot program based on national best practices. These practices have delivered very promising results.

- Participants in California's "LifeSkills '95" re-entry program were twice as likely as non-participants to be employed 90 days after release.
- The Boston Re-Entry Initiative recently found that only 37% of active participants had re-arrests in contrast to 64% of those who dropped out of the program.
- Chicago's "Southside Day Reporting Center Re-entry Program" showed that after three years, one-year participants in the program had a 35% recidivism rate, versus 52% of non-participants.
- Knoxville re-entry program participants had their parole revoked 38% less than non-participants.



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*For more information about The 3R Project,
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A New Approach for a Safer Community



The 3R Project is a collaboration between Operation Safe Community and Shelby County Government. It is one of Operation Safe Community's 15 strategies to make Memphis one of the safest communities of its size by 2011.

The 3R Project Overview

With crime on the rise and prison facilities filled beyond acceptable capacities, drastic measures must be taken to stop the cycle of recidivism. This means taking a holistic approach involving multiple programs offered through Shelby County Government, business leaders, not-for-profit agencies, the faith-based community and the general public. Additionally, there must be accountability on the part of the offender to make life changes.

Too often what awaits ex-offenders as they return to society are enormous obstacles and closed doors in locating employment, obtaining housing, finding transportation and reuniting with their families. Without securing these basic necessities, the alternative is to return to a life of crime and, thus, the cycle continues.

April 2007 marked the launch of The 3R Project, an Operation Safe Community collaboration with Mayor A C Wharton to rehabilitate, renew and reconnect ex-offenders with society. The program allows inmates with six months to one year remaining on their sentence to apply for the program and work for local companies. They start as entry-level employees with the possibility of promotion for good behavior and work ethic.



Plan of Action

The 3R Project is an intensive voluntary program that supports prisoners with housing, mental and physical health services, family unification, life skills and employment. The program is delivered in the following phases:

- *Phase I: Institution-based programs are designed to prepare offenders to re-enter society. Services in this phase include vocational and educational training, mental health and substance abuse treatment, life skills training, mentoring and full diagnostic and risk assessment. This phase may begin at the time of sentencing.*
- *Phase II: Highly specific re-entry plans are developed approximately six months before the offender's release date that address housing, employment, transportation, benefit reconnection, healthcare (primary and mental) and family unification. Additionally, identification and connection with probation and parole, social services and faith-based organizations are established.*
- *Phase III: Ex-offenders remain in this phase upon release from prison and until he or she has achieved stability in the community. Stability is generally defined as being employed and living in adequate housing. Responsibility for success during this phase rests with the ex-offender, human services providers, family networks, community/faith-based supporters, mentors, justice system supervision and case managers.*

Why this approach?

The release of serious, high-risk criminals after prison has long been a source of crime in the United States. This holds true for both adult and youth criminals.

Successful re-entry programs have proven to significantly reduce repeat violent offenses. These types of programs provide a continuum of support, which begins while a criminal is in prison and continues until he or she is a successful member of society.

There are approximately 14,000 people in Shelby County in jail, prison or on probation. About 67% are arrested again within three years of their release. In addition to the social costs of recurring crime, these statistics reflect an enormous waste of human capital that, if reversed, can help address growing local workforce development needs.

